



DIVEST RIVERSIDE!

“...to Foster Responsible Stewardship of All God’s Creation...”

a report from the

Beloved Earth Community of The Riverside Church



2015-2016

Greetings to Our Riverside Brothers and Sisters:

Thinking about God's world is nothing new to Riversiders: several groups from the congregation have worked hard on conservation and ecology issues since the 1970's. But it seemed like the time was ripe again when something started stirring in early 2013. A couple of people were fighting hard to put a stop to the dangers of fracking. Another one of us was inspired by a sermon to suggest inviting Bill McKibben to preach at Riverside. Because of the global importance of McKibben's group (350.org), a huge crowd swelled the nave and the sermon went viral on YouTube.

Emboldened, the group which came together at church called itself "The Beloved Earth Community," acknowledging the enduring importance to our congregation of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who called in 1967 in the Riverside Nave for the creation of a "Beloved Community" of the faithful, working to make a more just world. King's vision inspired us to work for justice as it pertains to the Earth and climate issues.

We've met and argued and laughed and protested and prayed, and after our community's resolution to support a "Total Ban on Fracking in NY State" was passed—nearly unanimously—by the congregation in 2013, we didn't have long to wait before Governor Cuomo agreed with us and other NY State groups and banned fracking in 2014.

By advocating now for fossil fuel divestment, we want to leverage the prophetic name and history of Riverside to make the biggest impact we can to slow or reverse climate change. Since oil and gas companies seem immune to the needs of the planet—they are only in the business of increasing their bottom lines—we recognized that the only hope we have of reversing climate change is to join a mass movement and make a symbolic point. Put our church's money (safely) where our Biblical mouth is. Divest from fossil fuels!

The nine-week seminar on divestment the Beloved Earth Community offered to the congregation in the fall of 2014 included the highest caliber speakers from the fields of investment, higher education, sustainability, science and more. Here we share some of what we learned, and we hope you'll join us in calling on Riverside to join the divestment movement. Please do not hesitate to speak to the Beloved Earth Community if you have any questions or seek clarification about anything in this report.

Written by the following members of The Beloved Earth Community of The Riverside Church:

Beth Ackerman

Alan Bentz-Letts

Jo Cameron

Kate Ellis

Sonia Ingram

Steve Knight

Regina Tate

Judy Turnock

Susan Wersan

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1. A Select History of The Riverside Church's Moral and Ethical Activism

“New occasions teach new duties; Time makes ancient good uncouth...”
Once to Every Man and Nation, James Russell Lowell

The industrial age, driven by energy from fossil fuels, promised and delivered unprecedented development and prosperity for many in Western Europe and North America. The lifestyle it powered was and is the envy of the rest of the world. But industrialization has always meant suffering for the billions of poor in the world, and now, roughly two hundred years later, the West itself is beginning to know the ecological dark side of the fossil fuel promise.

Scientists have confirmed that burning fossil fuels is causing our atmosphere to overheat at an alarming rate—what we know as climate change. Besides melting icecaps, an early proof, we see more virulent weather patterns—heat, drought, cyclones, hurricanes, tsunamis and floods—concentrated in the southern hemisphere but also right here at home, in the devastation in New Orleans, drought in central and southern California, and flooding in New York City. Yet this obvious threat to all life on earth has not prompted corporations or governments to act in meaningful ways to avert disaster.

This appeal urges The Riverside Church to join the worldwide mass movement—faith-based, academic and grant-making organizations, Pope Francis, scientists, academics, cities, countries, and millions of individuals—and state unequivocally that investment in fossil fuels must stop. For people of faith, this global struggle for survival is a defining moral and ethical issue of our time.

Riverside's Responses to the Challenge of Climate Change

Responding to the threat of climate change is not new to The Riverside Church. We are commanded by God to protect and cherish our earthly home and committed by our mission statement to “foster responsible stewardship of all God's creation.” See Appendix A. We have done so, alone and in concert with others.

- In 1994 the church adopted “A Statement of Commitment to Become a Sustainable Earth Community Congregation” and reaffirmed this commitment in 2004. See Appendix B.
- In 2013 a group of Riverside members formed the Beloved Earth Community and invited environmental activist and author Bill McKibben to preach at Riverside. McKibben achieved global stature as a co-founder and senior advisor at 350.org, an international climate campaign that works in 188 countries around the world.
- Beloved Earth shepherded an anti-fracking resolution through the Riverside congregation in 2013. See Appendix C.
- Beloved Earth, collaborating with other environmental organizations throughout the City and across the state, protested fracking. On December 17, 2014, Governor Andrew Cuomo banned fracking in New York State. The protest worked.
- Beloved Earth also organized a contingent of 42 marchers for the 400,000 strong Peoples Climate March in September 2014 and hosted a number of marchers from across the country overnight in the Stone Gym.
- Riverside has been working with Con Edison to reduce our carbon footprint, and we continue to adopt energy saving practices, including installation of LED light fixtures, upgrading of heating and cooling systems, insulation, roof and window repair, recycling and paper reduction.

Riverside's Experience with Divestment and Other Investment Filters

Using its financial and ethical position to strengthen progressive causes is another time-honored Riverside tradition. Senior ministers have all been outspoken on major controversial issues such as the Vietnam War, apartheid in South Africa and racism in America, nuclear weapons, and homophobia.

Freedom leaders as well as senior ministers spoke regularly from our pulpit against apartheid in South Africa. Congregation members demonstrated weekly at Citibank along with labor unions and other faith-based organizations, attended shareholder meetings to protest business activities in support of the South African apartheid government, and eventually in frustration closed Riverside's operating account at Citibank. Nelson Mandela personally visited Riverside when he was released from prison.

With regard to investment policy, Riverside's financial advisors and managers have been directed for many years to exclude the so-called "sin" stocks: pornography, liquor, cigarettes, and weapons. Such "filtering" is more than a dusty relic, for as recently as November 2014, at the request of Senior Minister Amy Butler, for-profit prisons were added to the list, to declare Riverside's public stand against the prison/industrial complex and, more particularly, the mass incarceration of young black men. The 2015 carefully-considered Justice-Based Investing Policy incorporates these and other far-sighted anti-poverty and equality initiatives as well as protection for those involved in today's protests. See Appendix F.

Does Justice-Based Investing damage financially the industries we exclude or eliminate poverty, inequality and discrimination? Not necessarily. Divestment from fossil fuels, on the other hand, has both a moral and financial purpose. It will increasingly delegitimize those industries in the public eye, and ultimately that loss of public approval will have financial consequences. In addition, divestment from fossil fuels is a moral and ethical declaration that we are living our faith and standing with others who share our belief in the sacred duty to cherish our planet, God's gift to us. By joining the divestment movement, we also encourage others to call out fossil fuel companies for endangering the existence of life.

Riverside has earned its reputation for moral and ethical leadership, even in the face of strong opposition, and its positions have virtually always been vindicated over time. The issue of climate change deserves that same leadership.

Beloved Earth Community's Study of Divestment from Fossil Fuels

Taking a page from Riverside's history of action, Beloved Earth identified divesting from fossil fuels as a potentially effective strategy against the threat of climate change. The result was a nine-week in-depth seminar in the fall of 2014, whose findings are reported herein. The seminar covered: the science, the Biblical perspective, links between climate change and poverty and racism, the financial impact of divestment, the mechanics of achieving divestment from fossil fuels, and the divestment movement today. The reading assignments for this seminar were extensive, and, because Riverside was the venue, Beloved Earth was able to attract a broad array of experts in the field to come and speak. See Appendix G.

Our Recommendation

Beloved Earth believes Riverside's strong prophetic voice must demand divestment from fossil fuels. More and more faith-based, educational and philanthropic organizations are on the path of prudent divestment from fossil fuels, providing ethical and moral leadership against climate change's threat to the planet. See www.gofossilfree.org for a current list of individuals and organizations which have divested. In Pope Francis's June 2015 encyclical *Laudato Sí*, he called on world leaders to overcome greed and cut fossil fuel emissions. A major effort must be mounted to persuade the Conference of Parties (COP21), meeting in Paris in December 2015, to renounce fossil fuels and show that we finally have the wisdom to survive.

As Pastor Amy has encouraged us, "If we step bravely and faithfully into the future, surely God will meet us there."

2. The Science Is Clear: Human Use of Fossil Fuels Is Changing Our Climate

Scientists working on climate change continue to rack up evidence that the earth is warming. At this point there is 97% agreement among the scientific community that global warming is happening and we human beings are causing it.

Earth is on its way to experiencing another annual heat record in 2015. In a decade-long series of global temperature records, 2014 was officially the warmest year since temperature record keeping began in 1850; nine of the ten warmest years on record have occurred since 2002. But how is the scientific community so sure this is not an anomaly?

To understand the climate change process, begin with a definition of climate. While “climate” is sometimes confused with “weather,” the latter refers to short-term (typically a few days or weeks) changes in atmospheric conditions. Climate, in contrast, is defined as long-term averages in such factors as temperature and precipitation.

Why is the Earth's climate changing, with rising temperatures and sea levels? The primary reason is that our burning of carbon-based energy from fossil fuels—coal, oil and natural gas—has increased the level of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in our atmosphere 40% since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. GHGs—which absorb infra-red heat emitted by the Earth—are key to our survival when they are in the right proportions: Earth's average temperature would be well below freezing without them!

The problem, however, is that our intensive use of non-renewable carbon energy has already built up GHG levels to increase Earth's average worldwide temperature by approximately 0.9° Celsius, almost halfway to the commonly acknowledged “tipping point” of 2° C (3.6° F) that the scientific community has urged us not to exceed.

The warming climate produces conflicting weather results, but the warming also creates more chances for extreme weather. One of the tendencies we see now is the atmosphere's ability to hold more moisture. As warmer water from the oceans evaporates, it creates moister air, which can precipitate dramatic downpours and flooding.

On the flip side, warmer temperatures also increase the rate of evaporation. This means drier soils and increasing drought and wildfires. Thus, we see higher than normal precipitation in one area and lower than normal precipitation in another, sometimes even in adjacent areas.

The California drought that started in 2011 underscores the severity of the threat, because California agriculture feeds the nation. When the Sierra snowpack was measured in early April 2014, it was only 5% of its average measurement. California depends on that runoff from snowpack to provide fully 1/3 of the water it needs for cities and farms. To try to stem the repercussions, Governor Jerry Brown issued an Executive Order in April 2015 restricting water use by 25% and beefing up enforcement of current water use restrictions; state employees were deputized to issue warnings and citations. Our food supply—rice, vegetables, almonds, fruit and more—is already at risk.

The effects of climate change are being reported across the globe. To the north, Arctic sea ice is melting and glaciers are disappearing. Sea levels are already rising; some climate scientists are predicting that the oceans will rise another three feet by the end of this century. That means every city on the East Coast of the United States – from Miami to Boston – would be inundated, as would coastal communities throughout the world. Low-lying islands are already beginning to disappear.

At the same time, the melting of Arctic permafrost is releasing the vast reserves of methane from its depths. In the short term, methane, which is also released from hydraulic gas fracking, is an even more damaging greenhouse gas (GHG) than CO₂. Although it dissipates in the atmosphere more quickly than CO₂, while it is there it traps 34 times more heat.

Our Carbon Budget

The negotiators who participated in the UN Panel on Climate Change summit in Copenhagen in 2009 agreed that the world's temperature increase should go no further than 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels, to avoid the worst of the changes. Yet the warming is continuing. 2014 was officially the warmest year on record, with 2015 on track to surpass it.

Because GHG emissions are produced by burning fossil fuels, our best hope for reducing the dangerous level of CO₂ in the atmosphere is to reduce the extraction, production, and consumption of fossil fuels. In order to stay below the 2°C tipping point, scientists have estimated the maximum amount of CO₂ human beings can burn is 565 gigatons. What we now know is that fossil fuel-producing companies hold in reserves (as assets on their balance sheets) 2,795 gigatons, or 5 times the amount we can safely burn! The estimated value of those reserves is \$27 trillion. If those companies can never develop what they now list as assets, as the divestment movement demands and the health of the planet requires, the value of their assets will plummet. Those assets that must remain in the ground are what scientists, activists and financial analysts refer to as “stranded assets.”

The human-caused effects of climate change are already occurring on all continents and across the oceans, with the poor of the world, including in the United States, suffering the most. Preparations to reduce carbon use are either nonexistent or insufficient. We still have opportunities to mitigate the current and projected damage, but those opportunities will become increasingly fewer and less effective as climate change progresses. We must act now.

3. Scripture and Climate Change: Can a Fresh Take on the Bible Save Earth's Creatures?

The Bible has a story to tell about our earth, and it starts on page one, verse one:

*First this: God created the Heavens and the Earth –
all you see, all you don't see.*

Genesis 1:1, Message version

A spiritual foundation from our Judeo-Christian heritage provides both the motivation and the continuing strength to work for the healing of the planet. Whether one gets spiritual grounding from Sunday School classes, seminary courses, Bible classes, sermons, personal readings, prayer, or all of the above, the Bible and our Christian teachings speak directly to the crisis we face today.

The stirring words of Psalm 104 convey the very human sense of awe we have about the gift of the Earth:

*Bless the Lord, O my soul.
O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
wrapped in light as with a garment.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,
You set the beams of your chambers on the waters,
You make the clouds your chariot,
You ride on the wings of the wind...*

The Psalmist continues in almost mystical praise of God's design of the earth and provision for its creatures:

*You set the earth on its foundations
so that it will never be shaken...
You make springs gush forth in the valleys...
You cause the grass to grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to use to bring forth
food from the earth, and wine to gladden
the human heart, oil to make the face shine,
and bread to strengthen the human heart...
O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.*

Psalm 104, NRSV

In the New Testament, speaking of God's care for us all, Jesus often expressed his appreciation for the natural world, for example with this lyrical reference to wild flowers:

*Behold, the lilies of the field, how they grow,
they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you
even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed
like one of these.*

Matthew 6:28-29, NRSV

In the face of such abundance, the Bible tells of a sacred and moral duty towards God's gift of the Earth. It is a call to care for all of creation, woven throughout scriptures.

In one of the most well-known passages, we read:

*Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it,
and have dominion over the fish of the sea and
over the birds of the air and over every living thing
that moves upon the earth.*

Genesis 1:28

Did God mean we human beings are allowed to do whatever we want to any living being? Obviously not, declares the Rev. Dr. James Forbes, Jr., in his 2010 book, *Whose Gospel?*:

*There is a difference between "dominion" and "domination." As ones created in God's image,
we must care for creation as God does. But God does not waste, damage, squander or pollute.
God preserves, heals, conserves and tends.*

Observing human destruction of our environment and now the extraction and unbridled use of dangerous fossil fuels, we see we human beings have not cared for the earth as God commanded. Instead, corporate greed, political expedience, and garden-variety over-consumption of fossil fuels have spun our world away from God's guidance.

Another constant human responsibility woven throughout the New Testament is caring for the poor. In Matthew 25, for example, Jesus commends those who have given him food and drink when he was hungry and thirsty, taken him in when he was a stranger, and visited him when he was sick or in prison. When the confused followers ask, "When did we do this?" Jesus answers:

*Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these
my brothers and sisters, you have done it to me.*

Pope Francis more fully explains this responsibility in his 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Sí*:

*Today we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it
must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of
the earth and the cry of the poor. ¶49*

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the theme of justice sheds light on the path of being in right relationship with God. Whether it is the Sabbath day of rest—in ancient times that meant the landowners, servants and domestic animals—or the covenantal call for a period of rest for the land (Leviticus 25), the lesson for our own time is resonant and compelling. In their time, the Old Testament prophets lived under increasing dominance by a ruling elite, and a growing gap between rich and poor. Such injustice inevitably meant harm, not only to human beings but to the earth as well:

*There is no faithfulness or loyalty,
and no knowledge of God in the land.
Swearing, lying, and murder,
and stealing and adultery break out;
bloodshed follows bloodshed.
Therefore the land mourns,
and all who live in it languish;
together with the wild animals and the birds of the air,
even the fish of the sea are perishing.*

Hosea 4:1-3

There is also hope in these passages, because we can make amends by restoring the land, thus restoring justice and coming into right relationship with God. The same need for making amends is present today, when most of the world struggles with racial and economic injustice and our planet's creatures and plants are becoming more rapidly extinct.

For today's Christians, awareness of climate change is another opportunity to come back into right relationship with God. Faith allows us to recognize that God's liberation through Jesus Christ is not only for humankind but for the whole of creation.

*For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Son,
that everyone who believes in the Son may not perish
but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

When we know, however, that “universe” or “cosmos” is a more accurate translation from the original Greek than the term “world” we use, we realize God's love is for everyone and everything that exists. The next verse drives the point home:

*For God did not send the Son to condemn the cosmos,
but that the cosmos might be saved through him.*

It is evident that God's intention is to heal not only human beings but the whole planet. A special consideration for Christians today, and a way to deepen our faith and sense of ethical responsibility, is to look at what contemporary lifestyle is doing to all living creatures. We can recognize that throughout the Bible, the whole cosmos is included in God's saving grace. It is not just that God's liberation takes place

amidst nature but that in the Bible **nature itself** is included in God's redemptive work and ultimately in the salvation God brings. Shouldn't we as Christians work toward the same goal?

To acknowledge the difficulties we human beings have in caring for all of creation is to recognize an opportunity to look within and have a vivid change of heart. We can dig deep into our faith and see the need to work to halt climate change as a Christian responsibility. Is a kind of modern repentance called for? Intriguingly, Pastor Amy Butler said in her April 19, 2015, Easter sermon, "Repentance means to turn around and go the other way." Speaking of climate change, she said that following Christ "requires a changing of our minds, a reorienting of perspective in light of the resurrection." In this way, this "repentance" can lead us to a fuller understanding of God's love and a deeper partnership with people from other faith traditions. We can even draw a parallel between the movement against slavery and the growing movement against climate change, as Dr. Forbes in *Whose Gospel* urged us: "We need to be proactive in our witness and become the new 'abolitionists' in regard to ecological oppression."

What We Could Have Learned from Native Americans

In the five centuries after Columbus, the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas have been decimated and their cultures almost destroyed by European conquerors. Now, in the twenty-first century, as we face the destructive impact of western civilization on the natural world, we can finally appreciate the wisdom expressed so beautifully by Chief Seattle many generations ago:

Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man.

We know that the white man does not understand our ways. One portion of land is the same to him as the next, for he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother, but his enemy, and when he has conquered it, he moves on.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth. This we know. All things are connected like the blood which unites one family. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.

4. A Close Connection: Climate Change and Racial & Economic Injustice

This chapter contains ideas and quotations from a longer essay published separately, written by Beloved Earth member Regina Tate. It is entitled "Letter to The Riverside Church from a Dark Sister."

At present we are all engaged in a dance of death, a holocaust for our planet and an ongoing holocaust in which law enforcement is extinguishing African Americans on an almost daily basis.

We of the Beloved Earth Community join our fellow member Regina Tate and appeal to both social justice advocates who are dedicated to racial justice and those who are fighting climate change to join together, for the battle is one and the same. Uncovering the causes of both racism and climate destruction reveals parallel and similar motivations.

In reviewing the long history of slavery and racial discrimination, moneyed interests were content to harvest African American lives for profit under the mantle of slavery. Today, one of the newest tools to enslave people of color is the prison industrial complex. The scourge of racism in our society has never abated. It has merely changed its form. In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech described black Americans as living:

...on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity.... America has defaulted on the promissory note [of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness] in so far as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this obligation America has given the Negro a bad check, a check that has come back marked insufficient funds.

Economic and racial injustice have flourished in the U.S. along with the exploitation of the earth for its mineral and natural wealth since the time of slavery. Here is the deepest link between the abuse of human beings and of the planet. The modern economic system of global capitalism is characterized by a number of corporate factors: the incessant drive for growth and profit; the hostility toward labor rights and fair wages; contempt for environmental regulations and protections; and the continued extraction of fossil fuels, despite knowledge of their complicity in causing global warming. In short, corporate greed has overwhelmed the just treatment of the poor, communities of color, and the earth.

Pope Francis calls this struggle for human rights and for the health of the planet "integral ecology," in his recently-issued encyclical, *Laudato Si*. He urges us to take a holistic view of the burdens crushing both human beings and the planet.

A true ecological approach...must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. ¶149

Pope Francis leads us to a second link between racial/economic injustice and environmental destruction. Many people have not paid attention to the issue of climate change because they erroneously perceive the damage done to our planet as a victimless crime. The identities of the victims of killings by law enforcement are readily identifiable. Concerned people know the names: Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Sandra Bland, the list keeps growing.

Similarly, many victims of climate change, while unnamed, are the poor and people of color. Just think of Hurricane Katrina, and how the people of the Ninth Ward were abandoned to their fate by local, state and federal governments. In some cases African Americans were shot just trying to escape the rising waters. Later, during Hurricane Sandy, numerous poor, black or elderly residents of the housing projects in the Rockaways were trapped in their apartments for days without power or elevators and sometimes food and medicines. While climate disasters affect all people, those without money or connections suffer the most and the longest, and sometimes do not survive.

The celebrated sociologist, Dr. Robert D. Bullard, often called the father of the environmental justice movement, highlighted the special vulnerability of communities of color and the poor. His landmark 1990 book, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality*, exposed the structural racism underlying the disproportionate burden of pollution on African-Americans. Bullard sees climate change as a newly added element oppressing the already oppressed: "The most vulnerable populations will suffer the earliest and most damaging setbacks, even though they have contributed least to the problem of global warming."

Abroad, many African nations, still emerging from colonialism with many citizens who are malnourished and barely able to find food, are facing sustained, severe drought brought on by climate change. Other African countries are swamped by flooding, a situation also exacerbated by climate change. Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in 2013 and devastated residents of poor communities without the resources to flee the storm or protect themselves. Climate change intensifies the conditions under which storms are created, and often those least able to withstand them bear the brunt.

We see the struggle against racial and economic injustice and the struggle against climate change and environmental destruction as one struggle. The links are plain. On the one hand, economic forces see advantage in exploiting both human labor and the animals, plants and other resources of the physical environment. And on the other hand, the poor and marginalized are most vulnerable to the destruction being wrought on the planet. To see the struggles as one reveals the framework for commitment to justice on all levels.

Climate change activists must embrace Black Lives Matter and the Economic Justice and Living Wage movements. All too often the environmental movement has been clearly segregated by race and also affected by class.¹ Can environmentalists begin to see that efforts to end racism (including environmental racism) and classism will weaken the very forces which are plundering the planet?

Likewise, can those who struggle against racism and poverty broaden their commitment to include the ecological systems on which all human life depends? Can they hear the cries of all those suffering on earth—not just the human cries but the cries of so many other living creatures and of the land itself? All members of the Beloved Earth Community join with Regina Tate in her appeal:

If you think you have no stake in the fight to save our world, I urge you to reconsider your position....Our collective house is literally on fire. Clearly, there is not an unlimited time to resolve either the racial or environmental problem. If we understand that economic corruption is at the core of each struggle, then we must understand that the battles are, in essence, the same: the battle to preserve all of life on our planet. We, as people of faith, must embrace this battle as our moral imperative.

5. The Prudent Path to Divestment

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Matthew 6:21

Divestment from socially harmful companies has long been a practice of religious institutions, including The Riverside Church. Many churches, like us, have refused to invest in the so-called “sin” stocks of alcohol, tobacco, gambling, prostitution and pornography. Military weaponry is a more recent addition to the list.

Justice-Based Investing at Riverside

The Riverside Church’s recently published Justice-Based Investing Policy sets the stage for decisions that factor in exclusions based on moral and ethical values. The rationale, as the Finance Committee chair explained at the May 15, 2015, annual congregational meeting, is to align our money with our mission. Referring to the “Parable of the Talents” in Matthew 25, she said the church has a moral responsibility with regard to its investment choices. She called it “Justice-Based Investing.” See Appendix F.

Revising the church's investment policy in response to recent police killings of African Americans and the outcry over mass incarceration and the new Jim Crow, the Finance Committee called for divestment from “public and private companies in the for-profit prison industrial complex and companies that exacerbate poverty and inequality in predatory ways.” Pay-day loan providers were also added to Riverside's list of exclusions.

The revised policy accepts that this new divestment “may” result in below risk-adjusted returns because it is more important for Riverside's portfolio to be “mission-driven and [to] seek, wherever practicable, alignment with its [the Church's] core values of economic and social justice.” The divestment is to take place in all asset classes of Riverside's portfolio for all markets.

The bottom line is that the revised policy is a bold, faithful and courageous response to the continuing, deadly racism of American society, and we commend the Finance Committee for this action. At the same time, the policy invites a similar response to the urgent crisis of climate change. Investment policies are not written in stone; they can respond to new threats emerging which are in conflict with key Christian beliefs and values. Is it not now clear and irrefutable that Riverside Church must respond to global warming by another decision to divest—this time from fossil fuels?

Divestment Tools

Because there are so many organizations and governmental entities already on the divestment journey, there are now tools available to guide divestment decisions. For example, a set of three criteria—Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)—has evolved over recent decades to guide those concerned about the moral and ethical use of their financial resources. Companies are rated according to the environmental sensitivity of their policies and practices, their treatment of their own workers and their involvement in philanthropy, and their management and governance integrity. ESG criteria are balanced with criteria based solely on a projected rate of return.

Many institutions already factor in ESG criteria in investment decisions, and there is a growing body of

proof that ESG ratings correlate positively with company performance. MSCI, a provider of equity, fixed income, and hedge fund stock market indexes as well as equity portfolio analysis tools primarily for institutional investors, recently reported on its analysis of eight years (2007-2015) of data about companies' results, based on its MSCI ESG Ratings. The report found that portfolios comprised of companies with high ESG ratings or companies who have recently improved their ESG rating, outperformed the global benchmark. "The drumbeat of evidence has continued to build to a crescendo," declared the report.²

Even though there are many sectors of the economy deeply involved in the use of fossil fuels, the divestment movement has a narrow focus: those corporations directly responsible for the extraction and production of fossil fuels. The Carbon Underground 200 (www.fossilfreeindexes.com) is commonly acknowledged as a reliable and regularly-updated guide to those corporations. It lists the top 200 publicly-traded coal, oil and gas corporations in the world, ranked by the embedded carbon emissions in their proven reserves.

The Carbon Underground 200 is neither anti-corporate nor anti-capitalist in its approach. Rather, it accepts the reality of climate change and contends that fossil-fuel companies have not done an adequate job of acknowledging the risks posed by their carbon-based assets. The Carbon Underground 200 aims to protect investors with a realistic evaluation of carbon-based assets, and to promote an orderly market transition to the coming low-carbon future. This list can guide the church and our asset managers in divesting from fossil fuels.

Steps to Divestment

What would the path to fossil-fuel divestment look like? The first step is to identify what investments the church has in fossil-fuel companies on the Carbon Underground 200 list. This means the Finance Committee and the asset management firms employed by Riverside must research all the portfolio asset classes. Even if Riverside Church is found to have only a small percentage of its investments in fossil fuels, there is still a need to divest and to make the statement against future investments in them.

The next step is to focus on any current fossil-fuel investments to develop a plan for divestment. Divestment necessarily needs to proceed carefully and deliberately, to maximize the value of the investments and to avoid unnecessary penalties and fees. In most cases we know of, divestment proceeds over a five-year period. For separately-managed accounts, it is a relatively simple matter to divest, as Riverside is now doing with for-profit prisons. It would just mean adding the companies on the Carbon Underground 200 list to the existing screens.

For the large share of Riverside's portfolio in pooled, commingled investments, the divestment process would be longer term. Our neighbor Union Theological Seminary, for example, has called upon the managers of its commingled funds to report if there are any fossil fuel companies in these funds. If there are, then Union will ask those managers to establish a fossil fuel free fund for consideration. Union has also committed to screening commingled funds which are not central to its portfolio, and to withdrawing from those funds if the funds will not divest of fossil fuel stocks. See Appendix E.

The easy step is to make sure all future investments are fossil-fuel free. Anytime an investment is changed by the managers, or new money enters the church portfolio, none can contain fossil fuel companies.

When Lisa Hayles of Boston Common Asset Management, a firm dedicated to the twin goals of financial return and social change, addressed BEC's 2014 climate change seminar, she relied on her professional experience to declare: "Divestment is doable. Don't let anyone tell you it can't be done."

Reinvestment

As divestment from fossil-fuel companies proceeds, funds will be reinvested in companies that are compatible with the church's values. Justice-Based Investing provides the model. Its call for guarantees of "direct loans to legitimate urban small businesses that are owned and/or operated by former felons or whose workforce is comprised of at least 1/3 formerly incarcerated persons and who pay their workforces a 'living wage'" is one option. See Appendix F. The policy acknowledges the inherent risk, stating such lending must "primarily seek capital preservation in these debt instruments" and may receive a "below market, risk-adjusted rate of return."

In a bold move, the policy calls upon the church together with its investment advisors to create "its own commingled fund vehicle (yet to be named) to [promote] high impact community development initiatives." This new entity, authorized to receive up to \$5 million of Riverside's money, will seek partnership with other "mission-centered" institutions. The Finance Committee accepts the possibility of a "below risk-adjusted market rate of return" on this new fund, with the target "+5% over 10 years" for this "justice-based investing."

The Risk of 'Stranded Assets,' Sustainability and Fiduciary Responsibility

Investment always involves risk. There is risk in divesting from fossil fuels, but there is possibly greater risk remaining invested in fossil fuels. The reserves of coal, oil and gas currently in the ground may become what are referred to as 'stranded assets,' meaning assets which can never be used either because renewables become more widely accepted or because future government regulations forbid it.

The very real possibility of 'stranded assets' has already prompted many financial experts to broaden the definition of fiduciary responsibility. Dr. Jim Yong Kim, president of the World Bank, at the World Economic Forum in Davos called on long-term investors to "rethink what fiduciary responsibility means" in the face of climate change and to address the financial risk associated with their carbon-intensive investments.³ Christiana Figueres, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, went further: investors would be "in blatant breach of their fiduciary duty" if they failed to divest from fossil-fuel linked funds in the face of the clear scientific evidence of global warming.⁴

Some of the funds divested from fossil fuels could be reinvested in sustainable energy projects using wind and solar power or other green energy developments. A 2014 comprehensive study conducted by the University of Oxford's Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment and Arabesque Partners, "From the Stockholder to the Stakeholder," collated findings from over 190 premier academic papers, industry reports, newspaper articles and books and concluded "it is in the best economic interest for corporate managers and investors to incorporate sustainability considerations into decision-making processes."⁵

It is becoming increasingly clear that it is not only responsible to incorporate sustainability into investment decisions; it may soon constitute a breach of fiduciary responsibility to overlook that perspective. A forthcoming report from the Principles for Responsible Investment and the United Nations Environmental

Program (UNEP) Finance Initiative, which builds on their ground-breaking 2005 Freshfields report, confirms, “A failure to consider long-term investment value drivers, which include environmental, social and governance issues, is a failure of fiduciary duty.”⁶

The evolving definition of fiduciary responsibility encourages more comprehensive analysis—and better investment decisions—at the industry, company and asset level. Combining qualitative and quantitative financial and sustainability data into one cohesive narrative allows investors to identify more readily business strategies positioned for long-term success, especially those concerned with sequestering carbon, reducing water use and fossil fuels.

The divestment movement played a key role in helping liberate South Africa. The corporations understood the logic of money even when they weren't swayed by the dictates of morality. Climate change is a deeply moral issue too. Here in Africa we see the dreadful suffering of people from worsening drought, from rising food prices, from floods even though they've done nothing to cause the situation. Once again, we can join together as a world and put pressure when it counts.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

6. Potential Positive Financial Impact of Fossil Fuel Divestment

The investment community has undertaken extensive studies of the benefits and risks of fossil free investing in recent years, driven by the public's increased awareness of the moral and financial aspects of this issue.

We offer summaries of a representative sample of five of these studies below, with a link provided to the full text of each, for a review in greater detail if needed. The studies' methodologies vary considerably, and it is worth considering their nuances. Nevertheless, we believe that the results obtained from all five suggest that investors—especially long-term institutional investors like The Riverside Church—are unlikely to experience negative portfolio returns by divesting from fossil fuels, and are actually more likely to enjoy returns that exceed benchmarks for investment industry performance.

Aperio Group: “Building a Carbon-Free Equity Portfolio” (2014)

This study looked at the performance of benchmark indices covering the following four markets: Global (MSCI ACWI), U.S. (Russell 3000), Australia (S&P/ASX200), and Canada (S&P/TSX Composite) over periods varying from twelve to twenty-six years, against hypothetical “Tracking Portfolios” for each index that excluded Oil, Gas and Consumable Fuels equities according to GICS (Global Industry Classification Standard).

The study found:

- The actual tracking error for each carbon-free portfolio was less than 1%, with the exception of Canada (2.91%). To put this in perspective, the standard risk (*i.e.*, potential tracking error) taken by the typical institutional investor is approximately 5%, making the study's Tracking Portfolios significantly less risky.
- The annualized returns for all four Tracking Portfolios over the respective study periods were between 5 and 8.5 basis points higher than their benchmark indices. Alphas (*i.e.*, performance on a market-adjusted basis) were higher than expected given the market risk for all markets studied except the U.S., which had a slightly lower Alpha (-0.02%).

The Aperio study commented near the end of their report: “The data does not support the [divestment] skeptics’ view that screening negatively affects an index tracking portfolio’s return. The data also shows that the impact on risk may be far less significant than presumed.”

The complete Aperio report is here: <https://www.aperiogroup.com/resource/138/node/download>.

Impax Asset Management: “Beyond Fossil Fuels: The Investment Case for Fossil Fuel Divestment”

Impax compared the MSCI World Index's performance over a five-year period (April 2008 to April 2013) against four alternative portfolios spanning the same time period:

- “Fossil Free Portfolio”: MSCI World with all fossil fuel energy sector equities removed.
- “Fossil Free Plus Alternative Energy (Passive) Portfolio”: MSCI World with a passive allocation to renewable energy and energy efficiency stocks.
- “Fossil Free Plus Alternative Energy (Active) Portfolio”: MSCI World with an actively managed

- portfolio of renewable energy and energy efficiency stocks.
- “Fossil Free Plus Environmental Opportunities (Active) Portfolio”: Replacing the MSCI World's fossil fuel stocks with an actively managed allocation of stocks selected from a range of resource optimization and environmental investment opportunities.

The results from these four alternative portfolios were positive for the time period studied. Annual returns from the alternative portfolios exceeded the MSCI World's by anywhere from ten to fifty basis points, while tracking errors ranged from 1.6 to 2.0% (again, keep in mind from the Aperio study above that a 5% tracking error is considered standard for institutional investors).

As the authors state in their executive summary: “Impax believes that investors should consider reorienting their portfolios towards low carbon energy by replacing fossil fuel stocks with renewable energy and energy efficiency investments, thereby retaining exposure to the energy sector while reducing the risks posed by the fossil fuel sector.”

The complete Impax report is here: <http://www.impaxam.com/sites/default/files/20130704-impax-white-paper-fossil-fuel-divestment-final-0.pdf>.

Advisor Partners: “Fossil Fuel Divestment: Perspectives After the Oil Bust” (2015)

This study compared the performance of the S&P 500 index over a 25-year period ending Dec. 31, 2014, to the performance of a divestment portfolio that excluded energy stocks, while increasing the weights of the remaining stocks and investments on a proportional basis.

The study found, “Simulated performance of the full divestment portfolio was virtually indistinguishable from that of the S&P 500 index.” The study used standard deviation to measure projected risk and found that in the divested portfolio risk increased by only 15 basis points, from 15.65% to 15.80%. Also, the divested portfolio's predicted tracking error relative to the benchmark was only 1.07%, well below the standard tracking errors of actively-managed portfolios. While the authors caution that investors with a more limited time horizon may find that the divested portfolio underperforms the benchmark, institutional investors with a multi-decade timeframe are unlikely to experience negative results.

The complete Advisor Partners report is here:

<http://www.advisorpartners.com/uploads/4/8/5/3/48535043/fossil-fuel-study-2015-final.pdf>.

Fossil Free Indexes (FFIUS):

Fossil Free Indexes (fossilfreeindexes.com) has, since June 2014, published daily its Fossil Free Indexes US index (ticker symbol FFIUS). This benchmark is composed of the S&P 500, excluding all publicly traded companies in the Carbon Underground 200, i.e., those companies having reserves with the greatest carbon emissions potential. See <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground/>.

The research showed the cumulative growth of the FFIUS has exceeded that of the S&P 500 on one-, three-, five- and ten-year bases (indeed, the fossil-free ten-year growth exceeds the S&P 500's by over 10%). In addition, the FFIUS's standard deviation over the ten-year period matches that of the S&P 500, while the FFIUS's Sharpe ratio (i.e., excess return received for increased volatility) is higher than the S&P 500's over the full ten-year period.

The complete FFIUS report is here: <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FFIUS-Factsheet-31-Mar-2015-Final.pdf>.

Sustainable Insight Capital Management: "The Risks and Returns of Fossil Fuel Free Investing"

This 2014 study imposed three negative screens (*i.e.*, exclusions) on the S&P 500 index for one-, three- and five-year periods ending Dec. 31, 2013, and measured the performance of each against the full index. The three screens were defined as:

- "Core": excluded all companies that directly own and develop fossil fuel reserves (*i.e.*, contained within eight of the Global Industry Classification Standard (GICS) sub-industries). This approach excluded 11% of the S&P 500.
- "Extended": excluded all eight GICS sub-industries in the "Core" approach and eleven other sub-industries that are large fossil fuel consumers (*e.g.*, airlines, feedstock, fertilizers, gas and oil utilities). This was the most exclusionary of the three screens, excluding 17.9% of the S&P 500.
- "GFF" (*Go Fossil Free*): this screen was given its name because it's the same screen used by 350.org's "Go Fossil Free" campaign. It excludes the Carbon Underground 200, *i.e.*, the world's top 100 coal and top 100 oil and gas, publicly-traded companies based on the embedded carbon emissions in their proven reserves. See <http://fossilfreeindexes.com/research/the-carbon-underground/>. The GFF screen was the least exclusionary of the three, at 7.8% of the S&P 500, because most companies in the Carbon Underground 200 list are not components of the benchmark.

For the study, assets from all stocks excluded in each screen were reinvested back into the index's remaining components on a prorated, market-capitalization-adjusted basis. While acknowledging that using only one benchmark to measure performance may appear arbitrary, the study maintains that the use of the S&P 500 index minimized geographical influences.

A brief summary of the study's results should give confidence to anyone contemplating fossil-free investing. All three screened portfolios outperformed the cumulative return of the S&P 500 benchmark over the study's one-, three- and five-year periods; and all three demonstrated a superior Sharpe ratio (*i.e.*, risk-adjusted return) over the full five-year period. "Interestingly," the study points out, "the most constrained portfolio, which had the highest level of exclusions [*i.e.*, the "Extended" portfolio], performed the best."

The complete Sustainable Insight Capital Management report is here: <http://www.sicm.com/docs/FFFI-Booklet.pdf>.

7. The Ineffectiveness of Shareholder Activism

In recent years shareholder activism has attempted to influence corporate behavior on the issue of climate change. Resolutions at annual meetings, proxy battles for corporate leadership, face-to-face negotiations, and litigation are all tactics that have been employed by shareholders and their proxies. The Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, for example, is an organization which assists faith communities on shareholder activism on the issue of divestment from fossil fuels.

One such activist shareholder is the collective Rockefeller family. Through a variety of strategies—letters, lunch meetings and shareholder resolutions—the descendants of the founder of Standard Oil (now ExxonMobil), urged the company to stop denying climate change, abandon climate denial, and begin to shift the business model to clean energy. After years of effort, the Rockefellers had to admit defeat, and they resolved to divest. Environmentalist Bill McKibben states the obvious: “It makes a very clear point that engaging with fossil fuel companies to somehow get them to change their ways is unlikely to work if the family of the founder can't get Exxon to shift.”

The first proof, then, of the ineffectiveness of shareholder activism is that it hasn't worked. The majority of shareholder resolutions have failed, often by large margins. For example, all 62 resolutions on climate change that ExxonMobil shareholders have filed since 1990 have been rejected. Corporate leaders are understandably against any change that might affect future returns on investment and have well-developed strategies to defeat any such resolutions.

Where shareholder engagement has been successful is on fringe environmental, social and governance issues. But as Bevis Longstreth, former Securities Exchange Commission Chair explained:

“The closer one comes to trying to affect core business issues or issues involving the safety, security and compensation of officers and directors, the less successful engagement becomes. In fact it's a bust. Thus, for example, trying to convince Phillip Morris to give up making cigarettes or Johnny Walker to abandon its distilleries will most certainly be a fool's errand.”⁷

There is no record to date of a shareholder-initiated action that has changed a fossil fuel company's core business model of extraction and production. In a world where fossil fuel companies currently hold in reserve approximately five times the amount of carbon that scientists predict would cause worldwide average temperatures to rise above 2° C, it is this core business model that constitutes an existential threat to the future habitability of our planet.

It is even argued that shareholder resolutions from prestigious institutions actually provide “protective cover” to fossil fuel companies, so they can stretch out the process of transitioning to renewables for as long as they can. It legitimizes talk over action. Shareholder resolutions may also take the pressure off government officials or leaders of nonprofits, who don't want to offend Wall Street by divesting.⁸

The goal of divestment, as Bill McKibben has said, **“is not to bankrupt the fossil fuel industry. We can't do that with divestment alone... but we can help politically bankrupt them. We can impair their ability to dominate our political life.”**⁹

Calls for divestment have increased recently among leaders in the financial community and former advocates for shareholder activism. Ellen Dorsey, executive director of the Wallace Global Fund, announced recently that a consortium of foundations, endowments and religious institutions, with portfolios totaling \$2.6 trillion, was divesting from fossil fuels and reinvesting in clean energy. She has taken the fossil fuel industry to task for its willful avoidance of the risks from continuing its core business model. Investors, she says, need to ask these companies:

“Why are you wasting this money looking for new and more costly sources of carbon [energy] that can never be burned and will irrevocably wreck the planet? Why are you not returning this money to us or spending it on the transition [to renewables]?”¹⁰

And Shelley Alpern, a long-time shareholder advocate with Clean Yield Asset Management, recently wrote:

“It once could be argued that fossil fuel companies' core activities were, on balance, beneficial to society... But with the two-minute warning having been sounded in the climate endgame, fossil fuel companies are now as lethal as tobacco companies. It's simply inconceivable that fossil fuel executives will—within the urgent time frame—come to see the write-off of 80% of their collective assets as an enhancement of shareholder value, or an act that will reduce business risk.”¹¹

Divestment isn't just for religious institutions to maintain their own integrity or to respond to intractable stubbornness. It is to delegitimize and de-normalize divestment's target and to demonstrate the repugnance of certain industries or governments. This is a fundamental part of the process of social change.... Divestment from fossil fuel companies is not only morally warranted. It is strategically irreplaceable.

Rev. Fletcher Harper, Executive Director of GreenFaith

8. The Call to Action

“New occasions teach new duties...”

James Russell Lowell

All of us at Riverside are faced with making a decision, not for any special group, several groups or even for a whole people, but for all life on this planet. And unlike in times of earlier climate change in the earth's history, human beings alone are responsible for our plight. Geologists now define the current era as the “Anthropocene,” because humankind has created the current conditions of our planetary crisis. The fate of the earth is in our hands.

In the preceding chapters we laid out the scientific, biblical, social and financial considerations that enter into a decision to divest from fossil fuels. We believe the reasons to do so are compelling. We further believe that divestment ought to be an important part of our “One Riverside” journey together.

With this document the Beloved Earth Community seeks to engage the whole congregation—clergy, lay leaders, and all members—in ending investment in fossil fuels. We seek a wide-ranging conversation, based on knowledge and fact, informed by faith and Biblical insight, and inspired by the church's long history of prophetic action against social injustice.

Today's principalities and powers—the U.S. House and Senate, many nations, and, most egregiously, multinational fossil fuel companies—seem determined to act as if blind to the hard facts of proven science, like the proverbial ostrich with its head in the sand. And this intransigence persists even as it is clear that we are nearing the 2°C tipping point, where the heating of the planet becomes irreversible. Riverside must call out with one voice: we all—along with the most vulnerable—have had enough!

Riverside has never shied away from tough decisions on matters of great moral import. We are a community of faith, rooted in the belief that the earth is a gift from God who has charged us with its care. How can we continue to profit from the burning of fossil fuels, which we now know means the destruction of life? We cannot, even if Riverside's investment in fossil fuels is just a small portion of the total portfolio. We cannot live the contradiction of profiting from earth's destruction. Let us wash our hands of any complicity.

The purpose is not to change the minds of fossil fuel companies. Rather, the purpose is to add our prophetic voice to the long list of faith communities and a host of academic institutions, universities and cities worldwide who have already taken this step. As the divestment movement grows, adding more and more influential organizations and individuals, political support for fossil fuel companies—and fossil fuels as our primary source of energy—will diminish. Our moral and ethical stand now can hasten that transition. We will be bending the arc of history toward justice, again.

Jesus himself, as a first-century man living in Judea, knew nothing of the enormous destructive power that humankind was to develop. Our use and ultimate dependence on fossil fuels goes back only 200 years—an infinitesimal fraction of the 2 million-year existence of human beings. Today, for the first time in the history of the world, human beings have caused a planetary upset in the balance of nature. We have acted as if we can do as we wish with impunity. We cannot. Nature is sending us a message that we have gone too far.

The same human pride, greed, and lust for power that ignored environmental limits have also been at the root of racial and economic injustice. The industrial age came at a high cost for countless men, women and children who toiled in hazardous conditions in mines and factories. The textile industry produced an insatiable demand for cotton, and the horrible oppression of slavery, which, perpetuated by a further century of Jim Crow laws, embedded in many Americans a deep prejudice towards people of color.

As Martin Luther King, Jr., denounced the evils of racism, militarism and materialism in his Riverside Church speech in 1967, it has now surely become clear that racist, militarist and capitalist forces are at work today in the oppression both of people of color and our vulnerable planet. Is not opposing both oppressions one and the same struggle? Last year Riverside took a stand against racism and mass incarceration. Can our church now take a decisive stand against climate change?

Just 50 years ago, Neil Armstrong supplied the iconic image of our planet as seen from space—beautiful and blue amidst swirling clouds—another vision of the unspoiled world described in Genesis as a garden. In a strange and powerful conjunction of science and religion in our postmodern world, it is the scientists, too often considered at odds with religion, who have called out the dangers all of us now face. We are supposedly intelligent—*homo sapiens*—yet we are not even allowing proven scientific evidence to awaken our sense of self-preservation. Even the threat to our children and grandchildren has failed to motivate our decision makers.

The gospel to which Riverside claims allegiance is the one in which we seek to live out Jesus' message that we love one another, care for the poor and our earthly home, and recognize that our true wealth lies in things unseen. Ours is NOT the “prosperity gospel.” Yet our attachment to oil and gas is blocking our vision of an inclusive world where other human beings, other living creatures, and the planet itself are loved, protected and valued.

New occasions can teach new duties. A prophetic church, historically Riverside's proud claim, acts on its convictions. We cannot fulfill our mission if we stand on the sidelines. We must embrace the truth in this defining issue of our day. Protestant leaders across the world have already done so: the United Church of Christ, the World Council of Churches, and many of our Anglican, Episcopal, and Lutheran friends.

And who cannot be moved by Pope Francis's moral resolve, as he heads an often conservative church into the challenge and opportunity of taking a stand on climate change? Just a few months ago, Islamic leaders from twenty countries added their profoundly moving, faith-based call for an end to the use of fossil fuels. Even the Rockefeller family, the source of funding for The Riverside Church and its endowment, has divested from fossil fuels, convinced that John D. Rockefeller himself would do no less.

We call on The Riverside Church to accept our responsibility “to foster responsible stewardship of all God's Creation,” in the words of our mission statement, and prudently to divest our portfolio of any holdings in fossil fuels.

We further call on One Riverside—clergy, laity, council members, committees and commissions, children and adults—to build a strong movement against climate change and to support divestment as a statement of faith in a brighter future where all God's creatures will share in the bounty of a clean, sustainable world.

Appendices / List of Resources

A. The Mission Statement of The Riverside Church in the City of New York

The Church seeks to be a community of faith. Its members are united in the worship of God known in Jesus, the Christ, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The mission of the Church is to serve God through word and witness; to treat all human beings as sisters and brothers; and ***to foster responsible stewardship of all God's creation.***

The Church commits itself to welcoming all persons, celebrating the diversity found in a Congregation broadly inclusive of persons from different backgrounds of characteristics, including race, economic class, religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, family status and physical and mental abilities. Members are called to an individual and collective quality of life that leads to personal, spiritual and social transformation, ***witnessing to God's saving purposes for all creation.*** Therefore, the church pledges itself to education, reflection, and action for peace and justice and the realization of the vision of the heavenly banquet where all are loved and blessed.

Approved, Religious Society of The Riverside Church, 17 May 1992; rev. 2 March 2008

A Statement of Commitment to Become a Sustainable Earth Community Congregation

The Church Council, the Mission and Social Justice Commission, and the Sustainable Earth Community Committee of the Global Justice and Peace Ministry of The Riverside Church commit prophetically to a new covenant with Creation. We envision transforming our institutions and communities to become integral parts of just, participatory, and sustainable societies. We acknowledge that this requires each of us to become responsible stewards of the earth's resources with which we have been abundantly endowed.

We are called to this because we have not heeded God's vision of creation. This has led to the destruction of ecological life forms, resources, and earth systems, which threaten the very existence of our families, communities, and our small planet.

Throughout history, The Riverside Church has given leadership to the critical issues of our times: peace, disarmament, the ending of nuclear conflict, civil rights, racial justice, and health care. We must now respond creatively to the global and local ecological crisis.

The Riverside Church

490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027 • 212.870.6700 • P.A.A.

Interdenominational • Interracial • International



We call on The Riverside Church to affirm:

1. The sacred value of all forms of life and resources on our planet because the earth is the Lord's;
2. The interdependence of all life systems, natural and human, because they are essential to the functioning of the whole;
3. The responsibility of human beings to preserve life in its integrity and diversity while avoiding destruction and waste of resources;
4. The right of all to a healthy environment and sustainable ecosystems now and for generations to come;
5. The principles of justice and equity, which promote universal participation in sustainable societies and require overcoming environmental racism and disparities between rich and poor;
6. The holistic nature of human life--physical, intellectual, ethical, and spiritual--which requires simplicity, frugality, and respect for all life and the earth's resources.

Therefore, on this day, we call on The Riverside Church to commit itself to become a sustainable earth community congregation by the following means:

1. Developing spirituality through worship, reflection, and action that cherishes, preserves, and regenerates the earth with wonder and respect for all of life;
2. Practicing ecological accountability of all our institutional resources;
3. Changing our lifestyles and consumption patterns so that we become responsible stewards of the earth's resources;

Finally, we pledge to join with other religious and community groups in education and action programs that seek to achieve environmental justice and ecological sustainability for our common home on the planet earth.

Adopted: June 5, 1994; Reaffirmed: April 25, 2004

Appendix C

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A TOTAL BAN
ON HYDRAULIC FRACTURING (FRACKING)
IN NEW YORK STATE
AS A PART OF A COMMITMENT
TO A SUSTAINABLE EARTH**

WHEREAS:

Climate change is an environmental and humanitarian crisis. The earth's oceans are on the brink of ecological collapse, wild lands are being destroyed with loss of biological diversity, dangerous chemicals are placed into products we buy, the food we eat, and the air we breathe. Increasing demand for water and changing climate patterns are depleting rivers and aquifers, and pollution is threatening what remains. National and global dependence on fossil fuels threatens our security and is a major factor in pollution of water, land, and air, and the major contributor to global warming.

Stewardship of the earth, including its air, land, and water, is of great moral and spiritual importance.

We must develop sustainable communities and lifestyles. We must conserve energy and other resources. We must spur the adoption of cleaner energy sources at home and abroad. We must guard our wild lands. And we must limit the use and release of dangerous chemicals, and the use of technologies that pollute our water, land, and air.

Of particular importance at this moment in New York State is the issue of advanced hydraulic fracturing (also known as "fracking"). Fracking involves injecting water and chemicals deep into the earth at extremely high pressure to break up layers of rock that harbor deposits of natural gas and/or oil. Fracking has increased domestic fuel supplies and has made it easier for natural gas to displace coal in electricity generation.

However, as practiced with current technologies, fracking creates unacceptable environmental effects including destruction of landscapes and wildlife habitat, impairment of rivers and streams, contamination of drinking water supplies, increased air pollution, increased global warming from release of methane gas, and contamination of land and water from toxic waste disposal, including release of large amounts of radioactivity.

There is growing doubt that the fracking industry will ever be able to meet acceptable standards of safety for human health and the environment.

THEREFORE,

Building upon "A Statement of Commitment to Become a Sustainable Earth Community Congregation," adopted by The Riverside Church on June 5, 1994, and reaffirmed on April 25, 2004,

BE IT RESOLVED:

That The Riverside Church in the City of New York supports a total ban on the extraction of shale gas by means of high-volume hydraulic fracturing (fracking) in New York State. The Riverside Church encourages the New York State government to commit itself to supporting alternative clean energy solutions which will be of more permanent benefit to local economies.

That The Riverside Church, including its members and ministers, will join in principled, nonviolent opposition to fracking in New York State and will communicate its opposition to all key state officials.

That The Riverside Church encourage and support efforts by its clergy and membership to focus on the issues of global warming and environmental justice in sermons, educational series and activities for youth.

That The Riverside Church will develop and put into action clearly defined and specific actions geared to realizing its commitment to becoming a Sustainable Earth Community Congregation.

*Approved at the adjourned annual meeting
of the The Riverside Church in the City of New York,
November 24, 2013*

D. Divestment Statement – The Rockefeller Brothers Fund September 2014

The Rockefeller Brothers Fund, a private charitable foundation established in 1940, has been working to better align its endowed assets with its mission since 2010, when the board of trustees approved a commitment of up to 10% of the endowment to investments consistent with the foundation's Sustainable Development program goals.

The Fund's initial priorities for investments from this 10% pool are focused on support for clean energy technologies and other business strategies that advance energy efficiency, decrease dependence on fossil fuels, and mitigate the effects of climate change. We also seek investment opportunities that align with the Fund's other program goals in the fields of democratic practice and peacebuilding, and in the Fund's "pivotal places" — specific geographic areas the Fund considers to be of exceptional regional or global significance. In the coming years, we expect the percentage of mission-aligned investments, including those targeted to clean energy development, will grow as we actively seek solid investments that will advance both our program and long-term financial goals.

Given the RBF's deep commitment to combating climate change, the Fund is now committing to a two-step process to address its desire to divest from investments in fossil fuels. Our immediate focus will be on coal and tar sands, two of the most intensive sources of carbon emissions. We are working to eliminate the Fund's exposure to these energy sources as quickly as possible. Given the structure of some commingled investment funds and investments in highly diversified energy companies, we recognize there may continue to be minimal investments in our portfolio in those energy sectors, but we are committed to reducing our exposure to coal and tar sands to less than one 1% of the total portfolio by the end of 2014. As we take the steps to divest from coal and tar sands investments, we are also undertaking a comprehensive analysis of our exposure to any remaining fossil fuel investments and will work with the RBF Investment Committee and board of trustees to determine an appropriate strategy for further divestment over the next few years.

In working to align our endowment investments with our mission and programs, we will adhere to the longstanding mandate of our board of trustees that our assets be invested with the goal of achieving financial returns that will enable the foundation to meet its annual philanthropic obligations, while maintaining the purchasing power of the endowment, so that future generations will also benefit from the foundation's charitable giving. In uncertain and volatile markets, these financial goals are not easy to achieve. Therefore, our divestment from fossil fuels, which is now underway, will be accomplished through a careful process of evaluating our exposure and a phased approach that proceeds as quickly as is prudent.

We hope that the framework the RBF has adopted to guide our divestment and investment strategies will be of interest to other foundations and institutional investors as we also expect to learn from the experience of others.

E. Union Theological Seminary's Approved Resolution Trustee Resolution on Investment Policies Related to Fossil Fuels

As members of the Board of Trustees of Union Theological Seminary, we take seriously our commitment to assuring that Union live up to the educational and theological principles stated in Union's Mission Statement. A key feature of that mission involves pursuing "care for God's creation." We are deeply concerned about the rapidly deteriorating state of the planet's health, and we are actively committed to finding ever new ways to participate in its healing. Towards this end, we have developed investment policies that lessen the harm we do to the earth.

As we take this step, we are conscious of our several important obligations to Union, its faculty, its students, and its donors, to do no unnecessary damage to our endowment's investment returns. We believe we can accomplish that end by proceeding patiently and thoughtfully with our longstanding investment managers as they accept our intentions in this regard.

We believe, as well, that giving our attention to these matters is an ongoing process and that our policies will develop over time. We also recognize that in addition to our investment practices, Union must have an integrated, campus strategy for addressing concerns about climate change and planetary health.

Below are the policies that the Seminary will implement going forward:

- We will ask the managers of each of our separately managed accounts to divest of, and not invest in, fossil-fuel companies, just as we have for liquor, tobacco and other industries.
- We will ask our valued, highly regarded managers of our commingled funds if the funds' portfolios include fossil-fuel companies. If so, we will ask for the formation of a fossil-fuel free fund and indicate our desire to consider that refashioned fund.
- We will screen those commingled funds which are not central to our portfolio, and, if those funds will not divest of fossil-fuel stocks, we will withdraw from those funds and find some which will.
- For any future donors to endowed funds, we will work to provide a fossil-fuel free fund, if they so wish.

We ask the Investment Committee to take appropriate care to implement this policy in a manner that minimizes its impact on the overall investment returns that support the mission of the Seminary and that they periodically offer reports to the Board as to progress.

Our view as Trustees is that Union should take these steps on moral grounds. As people of faith and good will, we care deeply about our planet and all that dwells therein, and we are determined to pursue practices that heal, not harm, our environment.

F. Justice-Based Investing (2015), Finance Committee, The Riverside Church

ACTION	THESIS	RATIONALE	INSTRUMENT	MARKETS SERVED	TARGETED POTENTIAL RETURN / IMPACT
<p>1</p> <p>Divestment from and/or additions to TRC's "restricted list" will be revised to include public and private companies in the for-profit prison industrial complex and companies that exacerbate poverty and inequality in predatory ways.</p>	<p>TRC's investment portfolio is mission-driven and will seek, wherever practicable, alignment with its core values of economic and social justice. TRC will not seek returns in its investment portfolio from companies whose primary mission conflicts fundamentally with its own. New additions to its list of "sin stocks" may include prisons/correctional facilities and pay-day loan providers.</p>	<p>TRC believes that poverty and inequality as well as a disparate criminal justice system are among the root causes of the deaths and subsequent grand jury verdicts of Eric Garner and Michael Brown.</p>	<p>All asset classes of the TRC investment portfolio may be affected.</p>	<p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>An increase to "negative screening" in portfolios may result in below risk-adjusted returns.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>Securitization of Legal Fees and Bail for members of the TRC community.</p>	<p>TRC will seek to encourage members of its community, who choose by their own volition, to engage in active and peaceful protest against systemic inequality.</p>	<p>TRC is an activist-centered community of faith.</p>	<p>A cash reserve of up to \$500,000 from the TRC investment portfolio will be established and pooled to provide for bail and legal aid to TRC members who become arrested as a result of peaceful protest and demonstration.</p>	<p>New York, Ferguson</p>	<p>Impact Only.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Guarantor of direct loans made to legitimate urban small businesses that are owned and/or operated by former felons or whose workforce is comprised of (>33%) formerly incarcerated persons and who pays its workforce a "living wage".</p>	<p>TRC seeks to mitigate the capital markets' risk of lending to businesses who are actively seeking to combat recidivism.</p>	<p>TRC seeks to re-invest in its community. Formerly incarcerated persons like Eric Garner cannot gain or sustain meaningful employment, forcing them back into illegal activities and the underground economy.</p>	<p>Subordinated Unsecured lower middle market debt and / or revolving credit facilities (up to \$250,000) underwritten by a community financial institution.</p>	<p>New York, Ferguson</p>	<p>Below market, risk adjusted rate of return. As guarantor, TRC will primarily seek capital preservation in these debt instruments.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Shareholder Activism.</p>	<p>TRC will leverage its status as an institutional shareholder to vote its proxy to positively affect the policies and operations of companies it owns both passively and actively. Shareholder activism will target companies whose employment practices are overwhelmingly deemed "unjust".</p>	<p>Maximizing shareholder value is the primary objective of the leadership of publicly traded companies. TRC's core values of economic justice should be "heard" publicly in this core objective.</p>	<p>Public Equities held in the TRC investment portfolio.</p>	<p>GLOBAL</p>	<p>Impact Only.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>NewCo Entity ("TBD")</p>	<p>TRC will partner with investment advisors to structure its own comingled fund vehicle (yet to be named) to high impact community development initiatives.</p>	<p>TRC seeks to re-invest in its community via a grassroots approach to its program of targeted investment.</p>	<p>Custom structured investment vehicle where TRC will invest opportunistically (up to \$5,000,000) in strategies that positively impact underserved and disadvantaged communities. TRC will lead the syndicated group of co-investors seeking partnership with other mission-centered institutions.</p>	<p>New York, Ferguson</p>	<p>+5% over 10 years (below risk-adjusted market rate of return).</p>

G. List of Speakers and Readings for Divestment Seminar, Fall 2014

Speakers

Dr. Andrew Ackerman, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies

Elizabeth Ackerman, GreenFaith Fellow; Riverside Church Council Member

Clarence Anderson, former Chair, Riverside Finance Committee; former Riverside Church Council member

Alan Benz-Letts, Riverside Member

Chris Fici, Student Organizer, Union Theological Seminary

Lisa Hayles, Managing Director, Boston Common Asset Management

Lisa Hinds, Riverside Church Council; Chair, Riverside Finance Committee

Sonia Ingram, Financial Analyst; Riverside Member

Michael Johnston, Chair, Investment Policy Committee, Union Theological Seminary; former Board Member, United Nations Advisory Board on Climate Change

Donna Katzin, Founder and Executive Director, Shared Interest; former Director, Interchurch Center on Corporate Responsibility

Steve Knight, GreenFaith Fellow

Amy Miller, City and State Divestment Campaign Manager, 350.org

Jan Rehmann, Visiting Professor, Critical Theory and Social Analysis, Union Theological Seminary

Oleg Slivinsky, Certified Passive House Consultant

Johannes Urpelainen, Associate Professor, Political Science, Columbia University

David Wildman, Executive Secretary, Human Rights and Racial Justice, General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church

Readings

Banks, Adelle M. "African-American Clergy Seek to Bridge 'Green Gap' in Congregations." See www.huffingtonpost.com, 3/2/14.

"Divest & Reinvest Now: A Statement from Theologians, Ethicists and Religious Leaders." See www.greenfaith.org.

"Extracting Fossil Fuels from Your Portfolio: A Guide to Personal Divestment and Reinvestment." See www.trilliuminvest.com.

"Fixing Climate Change May Add No Costs," *The New York Times*, September 16, 2014, p. A12.

Forbes, James A. *Whose Gospel? A Concise Guide to Progressive Protestantism*. New York: The New Press, 2010.

Gilbert, Katie, "Religious Groups Take Steps Toward Banishing Oil and Gas Stocks," *Institutional Investor*, August 19, 2014. <http://institutionalinvestor.com/article/3372355/investors-endowments-and-foundations/religious-groups-take-steps-toward-banishing-oil-and-gas-stocks.html?>

Gore, Al, "The Turning Point," *Rolling Stone*, July 3-17, 2014, pp. 84-93.

"Ground Zero in the fight for Climate Justice," *The Nation*, June 23/30, 2014, pp. 16-25.

Harper, Rev. Fletcher. "Divest and Reinvest. Now. – The Religious Imperative for Fossil Fuel Divestment and Reinvestment in a Clean Energy Future." See www.greenfaith.org.

Henn, Jamie. "President of Prestigious Colleges Explains Why Divestment Makes Urgent Sense." See www.gofossilfree.org, 1/23/13.

"Industry Awakens to Threat of Climate Change," *The New York Times*, January 24, 2014, p. A1.

Johnston, Carol. *And the Leaves of the Tree Are for the Healing of the Nations: Biblical and Theological Foundations for Eco-Justice*, Presbyterian Church (USA), 2006.

Knight, Steven, "Fossil Fuels: Time to Divest?" *The Episcopal New Yorker*, Fall 2013, p. 27.

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Rehmann, Jan, "Climate Change and Economic Justice: Essential Connection & Questions," talk at The Riverside Church, April 27, 2014.

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Waskow, Arthur. "Invocation of Universal Unity." See www.theshalomcenter.org.

Notes

- 1 Dr. Jan Rehmann, "Climate Change and Economic Justice—Essential Connections and Questions," Panel Presentation, The Riverside Church, April 27, 2014, p. 4. Oral version.
- 2 Al Gore and David Blood, "Navigating Sustainability and Your Fiduciary Duty," Huffington Post. https://www.genfound.org/media/pdf-sustainability-and-your-fiduciary-duty-huffpo_9.2.15.pdf.
- 3 <http://forumblog.org/2014/01/climate-call-action-make-2014-turning-point/>. From "A Devil's Bargain on the Climate," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 2/20/14.
- 4 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-25743457>, also from "A Devil's Bargain on the Climate," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 2/20/14.
- 5 http://www.smithschool.ox.ac.uk/library/reports/SSEE_Arabesque_Paper_16Sept14.pdf.
- 6 Fresh Fields Report: <http://uksif.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/FRESHFIELDS-BRUCKHAUS-DERINGER-2005-A-legal-framework-for-the-integration-of-the-Environmental-Social-and-Governance-issues-into-institutional-investment-UKSIF-Summa.pdf>. For UNEP: <http://www.unepfi.org/fileadmin/documents/fiduciaryll.pdf>.
- 7 Quoted in "Climate Change and Investment in Fossil Fuel Companies: The Strategy of Engagement Won't Work," *Huffington Post*, December 9, 2014. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/news/generation-change>.
- 8 Quoted in "How Mankind Blew the Fight against Climate Change," *The Washington Post*, June 9, 2015.
- 9 Quoted in "Fossil Fuel Divestment Movement Harnesses the Power of Shame," by David Gelles, *The New York Times*, June 13, 2015.
- 10 <http://www.institutionalinvestor.com/Article.aspx?ArticleId=3386594#.VT48v50iEXx>.
- 11 <http://cleanyield.com/talking-hand-engagement-fossil-fuel-companies-offers-little-promise/>.

A Prayer for Our Earth

by Pope Francis

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

○ God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts

of those who look only for gain

at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,

to recognize that we are profoundly united

with every creature

as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle

for justice, love and peace.